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April 17, 2008

Chair Susan Golding and
Members of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 9 th Street #1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
- VIA electronic Mail

RE: Support for MLPA Proposal #4

Dear Chair Golding and Members of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task
Force,

First we applaud the efforts of the MLPA staff for an open public
process, the Regional Stakeholder Group members for their hard
work and for the BRTF's encouragement of strongly adhering to the
Science Advisory Team guidelines.

On behalf of our over 1600 members on the North Central Coast we
strongly support MLPA proposal #4 because it has received the
highest marks for meeting the Science Advisory Team (SAT)
guidelines, leaves open many of the fishing areas popular with our
members, has minimal economic effects and provides for the
highest restoration and research potential. While we support the
breadth of Proposal 4 the bulk of our comments relate to the
Mendocino and Sonoma Coasts that we are very familiar with.

Proposal 4 gets the highest rating in meeting the MLPA goals
Proposal 4 has performed better than the other proposals in
meeting MLPA goals and is ranked highest in every category of SAT
guidelines. Proposal 4 offers the highest number of Very-High and
High protection areas meeting the preferred size criteria. Proposal
4 far exceeds the lowest performing proposal - 2XA - in offering
more kelp, deep rock, shallow rock, cobble bottom, shallow and
deep sand and estuarine habitats. As previous scientific literature
has shown this will result in a stronger level of protection and
sustainability of our marine ecosystems.

Proposal 4 leaves open many popular fishing and diving areas
The proponents of Proposal 4 including our organization spent
dozens of hours listening to anglers, divers, spear fishermen,

Harbormasters and coastal community businesses and residents to minimize impacts from closures. In Pt Arena, concessions were made at Pt Arena and Saunders Reef to respond to concerns from local fishermen, divers and the harbormaster. Compromises made at Pt Arena include moving the SMR boundary east to keep most Manchester beach crabbing grounds open and at Saunders Reef the Southern boundary was moved north to respond to concerns from small boaters out of Anchor Bay. At the Stewarts Point SMR the northern and southern boundaries were moved to compromise with anglers and divers and to preserve two public access points. At the Bodega SMR compromises were made in response to concerns by wardens of the need to provide more space for salmon fishermen and to provide some access to rocky habitat for small boat and kayak anglers.

Proposal 4 minimizes economic impacts to the region.

Every proposal will have less economic impact than the South Central Coast region. Proposal 4 had initial economic impacts of 14% before March adjustments and compromises and now has an 8% worst-case economic impact far less than the 11% impact on the South Central Coast. We have not had time to review the economic modeling closely but know according to the Sonoma County Economic Development Board that tourism- not fishing - is by far the largest generator of revenue on the Sonoma Coast. Over 3 million visitors flock to the Mendocino and Sonoma Coasts each year versus less than 14,000 consumptive fishermen and divers. The reality on the Sonoma and Mendocino coast is that only minor accessories are purchased and few if any big-ticket items such as boats, fishing rods, reels are purchased on the Coast. Lodging revenue from tourism dwarfs lodging revenue from fishers and divers according to Sonoma County Economic Development Board - Transient Occupancy Tax Reports. Proposal 4 will do the best job at increasing tourism and contributing to our local economy and should offset impacts from the proposal relative to the other two MLPA proposals.

It should be pointed out that the worst-case economic scenario is based on the completely unrealistic and unfounded assumption that fishermen can not move to another location if an MPA closes part of their fishing grounds. This is refuted by looking at the Klamath fish kill aftermath a few years ago when the fishermen that normally fished the Klamath resulted in an increase in fishing in southern Oregon. The economic impacts should also be placed in the proper light since the cost of fishery collapse is far greater than 8% as seen by the dramatic decrease in commercial vessels and landings on our section of the North Coast over the last 10-20 years.

Proposal 4 offers the best restoration and research potential

Proposal 4 includes areas that have suffered from over-fishing such as Saunders Reef and Duxbury Reef rockfish populations and Sea Lion Cove Abalone populations. Not only would proposal 4 offer the opportunity to restore these populations but also the research opportunity to observe and measure any increase in populations would be afforded. The proximity of the Bodega SMR offers an extraordinary research opportunity due to the proximity to the Bodega Marine Lab. Other proposals such as 2XA claim to allow proper conditions for testing spillover in this area but that idea will not work due to 2XA's shape which would thwart northward spillover due to strong southerly current that is compressed around Bodega Head increasing current strength and the habitat types being mixed. Proposal 4 offers another excellent research

opportunity at Fitzgerald SMR due to large amounts of data already collected and the large trained group of volunteers and professionals working there.

In closing we urge you to choose Proposal 4 since it will create an MPA array on the North Central Coast based on achieving scientific criteria and not the number of letters. . The proponents of Proposal 4 listened to our coastal residents, harbormasters, divers, and anglers and made substantial compromises to address their concerns and creating a true compromise proposal. For a future of sustainable fisheries based on science we ask you to chose Proposal 4.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments and the hard work you all have put into this historic process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don McEnhill". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Don McEnhill
Riverkeeper